

THE CRITIC AS ARTIST

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exists,, not between Nature and the mirror
that the painter
of landscape or figure may be supposed to hold up
to her, but
between Nature and the work of the
decorative artist. Just
as on the flowerless carpets of Persia, tulip and
rose blossom
indeed and are lovely to look on, though they are
not reproduced
in visible shape or line; just as the pearl
and purple of
the sea-shell is echoed in the church of St. Mark
at Venice; just
as the vaulted ceiling of the wondrous chapel at
Ravenna is
made gorgeous by the gold and green and
sapphire of the
peacock's tail, though the birds of Juno fly not
across it; so
the critic reproduces the work that he criticizes
in a mode
that is never Imitative, and part of whose charm
may really
consist in the rejection of resemblance, and
shows us in this
way not merely the meaning but also the mystery
of Beauty,
and, by transforming each art into literature,
solves once for
all the problem of Art's unity.

But I see it is time for supper. After we have
discussed some
Chambertin and a few ortolans, we will pass on to
the question
of the critic considered in the light of the
Interpreter.

Ernest. Ah I you admit, then, that the critic may
occasionally
be allowed to see the object as in itself it really
is.

Gilbert. I am not quite sure. Perhaps I may
admit It after
supper. There is a subtle influence in supper.